



Kimberly A. Foster
Executive Director

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

COMMISSIONERS:

CAROL O. BIONDI
PATRICIA CURRY
ANN FRANZEN, VICE CHAIR
SUSAN F. FRIEDMAN
HELEN A. KLEINBERG
DR. LA-DORIS MCCLANEY
REV. CECIL L. MURRAY
STEVEN M. OLIVAS, ESQ.
TINA PEDERSEN, LCSW
MARTHA TREVINO POWELL
SANDRA RUDNICK
STACEY SAVELLE, VICE CHAIR
ADELINA SORKIN, LCSW/ACSW, CHAIR
DR. HARRIETTE F. WILLIAMS
TRULA J. WORTHY-CLAYTON, VICE CHAIR

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **October 20, 2008**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Patricia Curry	Tina Pedersen
Ann Franzen	Sandra Rudnick
Helen Kleinberg	Stacey Savelle
Dr. La-Doris McClaney	Adelina Sorkin
Rev. Cecil Murray	Martha Trevino Powell
Steven M. Olivas, Esq.	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
	Trula J. Worthy-Clayton

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Carol O. Biondi
Susan Friedman

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Sorkin, Chair.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda for the October 20, 2008 General meeting was unanimously approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- September 15, 2008 - Unanimously approved after a proper motion.
- October 6, 2008 - Unanimously approved after a proper motion.
Prior to the approval of the October 6, 2008 Special "Retreat" Commission Meeting Minutes, the Chair and the Executive Director clarified for Commissioner Williams comments from Patrick Ogawa regarding funding. They indicated, at the present time, the Department of Children and Family Services provides 100% of the Commission's funding. The Chair stated other departments could be considered to augment the Commission's budget.

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair informed the Commission of plans to host the November 3, 2008 Regular Commission Meeting at Magnolia Place (Children's Bureau). Commissioner Worthy-Clayton inquired of the Chair the purpose for the proposed meeting at Magnolia Place. The Chair and Commissioner Rudnick informed the Commission about Magnolia Place and its development, creation, and the reason for holding the meeting at Magnolia Place.

- Cancellation of November 3, 2008 Regular Commission Meeting, unanimously approved after a proper motion.
- Scheduling of November 3, 2008 "Special" Meeting at Magnolia Place, unanimously approved after a proper motion.

Chair Sorkin briefly discussed the newly adopted County protocol regarding Public Comments e-mailed to the Commissioners by the Executive Director, which includes a requirement that all cell phones be placed on mute during public meetings. She also informed the Commission of the adoption of the new Children's Planning Council ordinance and their name change from the Children's Planning Council to Children's Council. The Commission no longer has a seat on the Children's Council, as the Council has reduced its membership from 51 to 30. The Commission discussed having a representative attend the Children's Council regularly on behalf of the Commission. The Chair indicated either she or Commissioner Olivas will attend on behalf of the Commission.

The Commission was informed that the Executive Committee met and drafted a letter that was sent a letter to Dr. Sophy regarding Body Mass Index (BMI) Protocols. The Chair indicated the letter was sent in response to recommendations made by the Obesity Committee.

Chair Sorkin and the Executive Director gave a summary of the "New Beginnings" conference they attended. Two of the speakers were Judge William Byer, who spoke about the need for a paradigm shift for the courts, social workers, parents, etc. to collectively see things through the eyes of the children and Andrew Bridge, who spoke about his personal experience as a former foster child.

Chair Sorkin reported that she will be attending a meeting convened by Sheila Shima, DCEO of the Health and Mental Health Services Cluster. This meeting will include Commissions

and CEO staff. One of the goals is to collaborate on joint projects. The Commission briefly discussed areas of possible collaboration for the Chair to present at the meeting.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORT- ELECTIONS

Chair Sorkin indicated that, at the September 15, 2008 Commission meeting, the vote taken to determine the number of Vice Chairs did not have a majority vote. We were unable to vote on this issue at our October 6, 2008 meeting and therefore need to take a vote at this meeting.

- Approval of the Number of Vice Chairs for 2008-2009 Elections
Prior to a motion, the Commission requested a history/reminder of the Commission's rational for having two versus three Vice Chairs. After a brief discussion, the Election Committee Chair, Commissioner Trevino Powell, called for a motion. Commissioner McClaney made a motion, for two Vice Chairs, seconded by Commissioner Franzen, the motion failed. Commissioner Kleinberg made a motion for three Vice Chairs, seconded by Commissioner McClaney, the motion passed by a majority vote.
- Commission Elections - Separate ballots were distributed for the Commissioners to vote for Chair and for three Vice Chairs. Commissioner Trevino Powell, Election Committee Chair, the Executive Director, and Commission staff tallied the votes. The Election Committee Chair read aloud the results for each of the 2008-2009 nominees. The 2008-2009 Commission Officers are: Chair - Commissioner Sorkin, Vice Chairs – Commissioner Curry, Commissioner Olivas, and Commissioner Pedersen.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Trish Ploehn, DCFS Director, informed the Commission of the following upcoming events: the Coalition for At-Risk Urban Youth event honoring Father Boyle and Judge Nash on November 14, 2008 at the Beverly Hills Hotel, the Rising Stars event on November 2, 2008 at the Disney Concert Hall with six foster youth performing, and the California Youth Connection (CYC) dinner on November 13, 2008, which is being organized by the youth themselves.

Director Ploehn gave a brief report on the State and County budget's impact, and indicated that overall, DCFS faired pretty well, but there was one significant federal cut over \$1million in Promoting Safe and Stable Family (PSSF)funds. These are funds for the family preservation, family support, time limited family reunification, and the adoption promotion support services programs. She informed the Commission that DCFS is having internal discussions to backfill those funds with Title IV-E Waiver funds, and that the County is asking departments for projected budget cut exercises with 3%, 5%, and 7% reductions in anticipation of future cuts. A Countywide hiring freeze is also anticipated in the near future. Unlike in the past, Department Heads will have full authority over which positions will be filled in their departments. Director Ploehn stated that DCFS' priority will be to keep their front line positions fully staffed.

Director Ploehn also reported on Title IV-E Waiver and stated that the first years outcomes generated approximately \$28.1 million of reinvestable funds to spend within approximately the next three and half years. DCFS is having discussions with the Probation Department, community partners and caregivers on how that money can be best spent. Chair Sorkin informed the Commission that Probation and DCFS staff are scheduled to present to the Commission at the November 3rd Commission Meeting to provide an update on the Title IV-E Waiver.

Chair Sorkin asked Director Ploehn regarding two items from the October 21, 2008 Board of Supervisors Agenda; item #25 dealing with Countywide Home Visitation/Visiting Nurses Program using Public Health Nurses, and item #16 regarding Foster Family Agency and Group Home Foster Care Services Contracts. She cited the need for mothers who may have such challenges as homelessness and mental health issues with services. The Chair commented on the need to track families from the first trimester of pregnancy to two or three years later. Director Ploehn informed the Commission that there is a lack funding to address the additional families identified by the Commissioner with the Public Health Nurses. With respect to group home contracts, Chair Sorkin indicated that the Commission's Obesity Committee has looked at the need to strengthen the language of group home contracts regarding nutrition and physical exercise.

The Commission briefly discussed concerns regarding the Commission's budget and the roles of the Executive Office. Commissioner Williams expressed concern about the Executive Office managing the Commission's budget. Chair Sorkin informed the Commission that it has been brought to her attention by the Executive Office that items such as out of state travel and food can no longer be purchased by the Commission as in the past. Commissioner Worthy-Clayton and Director Ploehn informed the Commission that the issue regarding the purchase of food has been a long standing county practice. The Executive Director informed the Commission that she will also address the budget and staffing issues during her report later on the agenda.

VIII. COMMISSION RETREAT FOLLOW-UP

Commissioner Olivas recapped the highlights of the presentation that the DCEO, Miguel Santana, gave at the Retreat. He emphasized that the CEO's office wants the Commission to focus on five priorities for the next year, as well as solutions rather than just citing problems. Commissioner Olivas requested the Commission to review the current Committees to determine which priorities will be carried on next year. Education, Child Fatality, Childhood Obesity, Mental Health and the Structural Operation of the Commission were identified as potential areas of focus. Commissioner Olivas inquired of the Commission if there are efforts/activities of the Commission that could be discontinued; none were identified. The Commission agreed to continue the Retreat discussion and come to a conclusion at a future date. Commissioner Olivas also reminded the Commission that the CEO's office wants to be able to measure the effectiveness and relevance of the Commission's work. Miguel Santana will be attending the Commission meetings on a quarterly basis.

IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director discussed with the Commission a grid that was e-mailed to them reflecting the various tasks/duties associated with many of the daily/routine administrative/executive responsibilities and workload of the Commission Office. The Executive Director informed the Commission that the grid and update is a follow-up to the Retreat and previous discussions at Commission Meetings regarding budget and staffing; and conversations with DCFS and the BOS Executive Office, as well as conversations with the BOS Executive Office, the Commission Chair, and the Executive Director. The Executive Director provided the Commission with a brief overview of the historical staffing pattern in the Commission Office, the current staffing, and the implications for meeting the needs of the office and the Commission given the current budget climate and the reduction in staff, as DCFS has requested that the Commission Office not fill the full-time Intermediate Typist Clerk (ITC) position.

The Executive Director informed the Commission that changes will need to occur in the volume/amount of work taking place in the office given the staff reduction. In addition, the Executive Director informed the Commission of the importance of creating a mechanism to submit funding requests to DCFS for staff and Commissioner training, conference travel, office technology equipment, etc. Additionally, the Executive Director shared recommendations to reduce the number of Commission Meetings to once monthly, Committee Meetings to no more than once every other month, no more than two meetings on a particular day, and no meetings prior to the Commission Meeting. The Executive Director also recommended establishing a regular meeting schedule for all Committee Meetings for the purpose of meeting planning and scheduling. Finally, the Executive Director recommended the identification of Commissioners to work with her and DCFS regarding funding matters.

Commissioner Rudnick voiced concerns about having one Commission meeting per month. However, County Counsel, Katie Bowser, indicated the Commission is only required to have one meeting per month.

Chair Sorkin stated that consensus has been reached and implemented on the following:

1. Utilize Action Item Format for committee meeting minutes.
2. Schedule no more than two meetings on any single day, and no committee meeting scheduled prior to Commission meetings.
3. Commissioner Worthy-Clayton suggested use of e-mail as the standard for disseminating information.

During the Chair's Report, Commissioner Williams recommended using the Executive Committee or and Special Committee to work with the Executive Director regarding funding issues. Commissioner Pedersen recommended using the Chairs' Meeting as a venue to address structure regarding Committee Meetings. In response to Commissioner Pedersen's recommendation, the Chair stated she would convene a Chairs' Meeting to address the structural/operation issues presented by the Executive Director. Commissioner Worthy-

Clayton and Commissioner Williams inquired of Director Ploehn, her willingness to continue the use of temporary office staff and to also explore the possibility of the Commission Office retaining the ITC position. Director Ploehn indicated she currently has staff reviewing staffing and will look into the matter and is open to the Commission Office maintaining the use of temporary office staff.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

XI. ADJOURN

Commission Chair Sorkin adjourned the meeting.